



A Congregation of ECO  
A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians

TOCCOA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Celebrating Jesus | Growing Together | Serving in Word and Deed



Toccoa, Georgia

# Christianity or Religion?

The **gospel-birthed, Christian life is a supernatural life.** A Christian is a person who has become a new creation by the power of the Holy Spirit working through faith in the wonderful message of the Gospel. As a result, everything is new and different. The life of God has indwelt the soul and changes the Christian from the inside-out. This produces a self-liberating and joyful experience.

**Religion, on the other hand, is natural.** It is the good and spiritual things that humans do in trying to please their god and others. It works from the outside and seeks to alter our behavior. It often mimics Christianity, but is the death of true Christian experience. It is a ponderous life that is filled with self-effort and discouragement.

It is **absolutely essential that each of us grasps the difference between the Gospel life and counterfeit religious life.** Here are some principles drawn from several thinkers on this subject.

In Religion, we **strive to obey in order to be accepted** by God, fearing what he might do if we're disobedient. But the Gospel empowers us to **freely obey because we are already accepted**, because the judgment against our sin fell upon Jesus, and there is no guilt or condemnation left for us.

In Religion, I **obey in order to get** things from God, often making promises about what I will do or how I will change. But the Gospel tells me what God has done for me, and his grace teaches me to **obey out of joyful gratitude** for all that he has already given me. I obey to enjoy God.

In Religion, my **identity and self-worth are based on what I can accomplish**, on how hard I work, or on how moral I am. Therefore, I look down on others who aren't as moral or obedient as me. But in the Gospel, my **identity and self-worth are based on God's gracious love for me in Jesus**, even while I was his enemy, unable to

accomplish or earn his love by my actions. Therefore, I can't look down on someone different than me because I am no better than they are – and probably worse.

Religion says, if I obey, God will love me. Gospel says, because God loves me, I can obey.

Religion has good people & bad people. Gospel has only repentant and unrepentant people.

Religion depends on what I do. Gospel depends on what Jesus has done.

Religion has the goal to get from God. Gospel has the goal to get God.

Religion is about me. Gospel is about Jesus.

Religion has an uncertainty of our standing before God. Gospel has certainty based upon Jesus' work.

Religion sees Jesus as the means. Gospel sees Jesus as the end.

Religion ends in either pride or despair. Gospel ends in humble joy.

**So, what about you? Which life are you living?**

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## Special points of interest:

- *Sunday, May 12th is Mother's Day!*
- *Please submit your information for a combined newsletter (June, July & August) by Monday, May 20th. Thank you.*

## Music Notes

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“Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!”

~Psalm 95:1

"The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul." ~ Johann Sebastian Bach

"We can mention only one point (which experience confirms), namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. No greater commendation than this can be found — at least not by us. After all, the gift of language combined with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God with both word and music, namely, by proclaiming [the Word of God] through music." ~Martin Luther

"I play the notes as they are written, but it is God who makes the music." ~ Johann Sebastian Bach

"Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn— shout for joy before the LORD, the King. Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." ~Psalm 98:4-7

"Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." ~Martin Luther

"Where there is devotional music, God is always at hand with His gracious presence." ~ Johann Sebastian Bach

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." ~Colossians 3:16,

"Music is an agreeable harmony for the honor of God and the permissible delights of the soul." ~ Johann Sebastian Bach

"Music is one of the fairest and most glorious gifts of God." ~Martin Luther

"Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!" ~Psalm 150:1-6

## The Joyful Noise Handbell Choir

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The Joyful Noise Handbell Choir has had a wonderful year of practicing, playing and enjoying fellowship as we make beautiful music together to praise God!

### Thank You!

Thank you, members, for all of your hard work and for using your talents for praising God with the unique sound of handbells. It is a blessing being your director!

I'd also like to thank David and June Stuft and Jenny Morden for substituting for us, even with short notice! You are fantastic!

Handbell players and other church members, I appreciate your help setting out and putting up the handbell tables and bells this past year. You are AWE-SOME! God has truly blessed our church with considerate and thoughtful members.

### Upcoming

The Joyful Noise looks forward to playing two pieces in worship on May 19th.

### Final Rehearsal of the Season

Plans are to meet at 4:30 p.m. on May 19th for our final rehearsal of the season. We will polish the handbells and store them away for the summer. Afterwards we will celebrate a great year by going out to eat together.

### Handbells Resume

Rehearsals will resume again at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 11th.



### Ringers Needed

Additional Handbell Players are needed! If you're interested in playing please see Mona Keister or Sharon Morden.

# Mercy Ministry

## Baby Bottle Offering

There is still time to collect money for a special offering to benefit Toccoa Life. Fill your bottles with loose change, cash and/or checks *made payable to Toccoa Life* and turn them in at any time now through Mother's Day, May 12.

## Coffee Fellowship

Coffee Fellowship volunteers are needed for the month of May and beyond. We love variety, so the food can be very simple or elaborate—you choose. Please sign up on the Pond Street bulletin board or by contacting Jan Evans, 813-758-3032 or [deaconjan@gmail.com](mailto:deaconjan@gmail.com).

## Prayer List

Those with prayer concerns should contact our church secretary, Janet Chitwood, [tpsecretary@windstream.net](mailto:tpsecretary@windstream.net) or 706-886-3680 or Jenny Bell at 706-754-7194 or [jennycbell@windstream.net](mailto:jennycbell@windstream.net).

## Little League Concessions Stand

Mercy Ministry is staffing the Little League Concessions Stand on Friday May 3, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM and Friday, May 10, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM. As we cover the concession stand this allows the parents to watch their child play baseball—and we always have fun together! If you'd like to volunteer please contact Barry Hodges at 706-779-3013 or [bhodges1@ix.netcom.com](mailto:bhodges1@ix.netcom.com).

## Guidelines Approved by Session

Guidelines for providing assistance were approved by Session on March 21, 2019. Mercy Ministry assesses the short and long term needs of individuals requesting assistance and when appropriate guides them to the appropriate agencies for help. The Ministry also uses the opportunities to address spiritual needs and guide them closer to God.



## Presbyterian Team Serves at The Hope Center

Cherri & Larry Shaw prepared and served The Hope Center Family Dinner on April 2, 2019. Gary Lance said it was a huge success. Thanks to Cherri & Larry Shaw, Erik & Rosale Bolstad, Greg & Renee Corbett, and Ken & LaRayne DeMann for reaching out to our community with your time and talents. This team will continue their service by volunteering at The Hope Center on the first Tuesday monthly.

## Mercy Ministry's Highlight of the Month



The NEGA Housing Authority is in need of items for two emergency shelters.

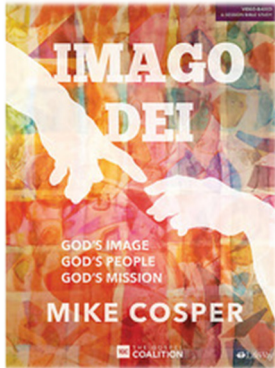
Items desperately needed are:

1. bath towels & bath cloths
2. blankets
3. sheets (full & queen)
4. shower curtains
5. plastic cups

Your donations may be delivered to the following location:  
437 South Pond Street  
Toccoa, Georgia  
706-886-9455



# The Discipleship Ministry to Offer an Additional Class



In addition to the ongoing David C. Cook Adult Class offered Sundays at 10:00 AM, the Discipleship Ministry is offering a second class beginning later in May through the end of June.

This six-week study titled, *Imago Dei*, is authored by Mike Cospers and Gospel Coalition. *Imago Dei* examines the image of God biblically within the grand narrative of Scripture, relationally as it applies to ourselves and others, and missionally in our service to others and in our obedience to the Great Commission.

This Bible study will help you:

- understand what it means to be created in the image of God;
- discover renewed purpose in serving others for the glory of God;
- be better equipped to participate in the mission of God.

Chip Hayner and Angie Ramage will be co-teaching this class. The format of the class includes a study book, in-class video and discussions as well as additional study opportunities.

If you are interested in participating and are willing to commit to the full six-week study, please sign up on the Pond Street bulletin board under Discipleship by **Sunday, May 5**.

## Presbyterian Women



**SAVE THE DATE!**  
*for*

*A Vintage Ladies' Luncheon  
On Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 12:00*

*Don your hat and gloves and join us  
As we step back in time!*

*PowerPoint Program: An Early History of  
Our Church and its Ladies*

*Hostesses: Jenny Bell, Mary Camp,  
Renee Corbett, Beth McDonald  
Lynn Newsom*



## Fellowship Dinner & Hymn Sing

Join the Worship Ministry at Henderson Falls Park on Wednesday, May 22nd for the Fellowship Dinner Picnic and Hymn Sing. (In the event of rain please meet at the church.)

Hamburgers, hot dogs, buns, condiments and the trimmings will all be provided by the Worship Ministry. We ask that you bring sides and desserts.

### Bible Study

The Presbyterian Women will meet for Bible Study on Wednesday, May 1 at 10:30 a.m. and Thursday, May 2nd at 6:00 p.m.

### Prayer Night

Please make plans to join us for a night of prayer for the women of the church on Thursday, May 28th at 6:00 p.m. We will meet in the Parlor Classroom. If you are unable to attend but have a prayer request, please call Janice Parker, 706-886-9005, or Judy Lance, 706-886-8341.